



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



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Director

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TO: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
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FROM: Richard J. Bruckner
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SUBJECT: LAND ENTITLEMENT PROCESS REVIEW – STATUS UPDATE

Background

On May 25, 2010, the Board of Supervisors directed Regional Planning to prepare a comprehensive review of case processing, including:

- Identifying specific time-frames for case processing, with performance metrics for processing land-use approvals
- Determining measures to streamline the process for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, particularly measures that will expedite Environmental Impact Reports
- Document how the Department complies with the Permit Streamlining Act
- Discussion of possible means of expanding the Special Projects section to process more of the larger projects
- Providing a better means of accounting for those projects which are based on a "deposit" system
- Reaching out to building industry representatives, consultants who regularly process applications and members of the public to solicit feedback concerning both the proposed processing improvements and the fee increases

The Board asked the Department to report back within a six-month timeframe. This is the fourth status update; a final report will be submitted to your Board in early December.

Stakeholder Committee—Fourth and Fifth Meetings

The Stakeholder Committee consists of representatives from the building industry, BIA, consultants, Urban Land Institute, LAEDC and the environmental community. The fourth and fifth meetings of the Committee were held on September 30 and October 21, respectively. The September/October meetings were used to better define the proposed process improvements and to begin categorizing them as short-term or long-term with

respect to implementation timeframe. The primary discussion was in each of the following improvement areas:

- **Redefining “One Stop” services**
 - Provide new “One Stop” services at multiple points in the process
 - Benefits include increased opportunity for collaboration, avoiding mistakes/misunderstandings and better coordination of conditions of approval between departments
- **Intake Improvements**
 - Provide image capture of some submission documents; create an Intake pilot project; create a workflow and electronic submission pilot project; develop financial and submission checklists, and eliminate backlog
 - Benefits include reduction in paper submissions, faster routing and better tracking of cases, reduced storage requirements, better understanding for fees and submission requirements, faster action on reviews and shorter review periods
- **Application Review Improvements**
 - Conduct a pilot project for electronic plan review and markup; formulate a change management plan for electronic plan review and markup
 - Benefits include the ability to test the viability of electronic plan review and markup for multiple case types, prepare staff for transition to electronic plan review and markup and leverage existing investment in ECM technology
- **Tentative Map Simplification**
 - Reduce the engineering details required for Tentative Map submissions; develop process for submitting engineering details prior to Final Map approvals; improve Subdivision Committee process; improve coordination between departments
 - Benefits include a more predictable process, reducing the time and cost required to complete the Tentative Map process, and improved opportunities for making desirable changes in projects
- **Substantial Conformance Standards**
 - Define and document “Substantial Conformance” standards; identify key measures of substantial conformance; define “tolerance” values for substantial conformance determination
 - Benefits include reduction in project “re-work”, reduction in hearings, reduced time and cost to get projects to construction, continued conformance with good project standards and planning practices and better adherence to Conditions of Approval
- **Fee Management**
 - Improve cost recovery time collection for drawdown accounts; implement daily time recording practices; improve activity tracking for fixed fee services; develop ongoing fee management practices

- Benefits include more accurate accounting for direct costs, better reporting for drawdown account, better forecasts for supplemental drawdown deposits and better fee increase rationale
- **Park Fee Calculation**
 - Develop a replacement for the current Park Fee Calculation program by creating a new application using GIS
 - The primary benefits are ease of use and avoiding a pending system failure
- **Forms and Instructions**
 - Develop customer oriented process documentation for all customer facing processes; create a Web portal for forms and instructions; develop customer entry with on-line forms library (Adobe forms or ECM web forms)
 - Benefits include less customer confusion, fewer questions; better, more complete and more accurate submissions, less data entry and easier transition to full electronic submission
- **Internal Documentation**
 - Develop cross department documentation of all processes; focus on cross departmental activities; develop standards for service quality; develop standards for responsiveness; form a quality improvement and problem resolution group; take feedback and comments from Stakeholder Committee
 - Benefits are a continuous improvement process and better and more consistent services
- **Referrals**
 - Develop documentation of all referral requirements; establish standards for referral issuance and replies; create MOUs with referral agencies; create a referral tracking mechanism with follow up
 - Benefits are more consistent referral responses; improved turn-around time for referrals and fewer last-minute processing of referrals
- **Hearings**
 - Create standards for electronic Hearing packets; begin production of electronic Hearing packet materials; conduct pilot project with one or more Planning Commissioners
 - Benefits include preparing for migration to electronic Hearing packet review and increased utilization of new hearing room
- **Performance Metrics and Measurement**
 - Develop Performance Measurement standards
 - The primary benefit is preparation for implementation of new systems

Reorganization of the Department of Regional Planning and exploration of co-location options for Regional Planning, Public Works and the Fire Department continue to be critical areas of focus in this process. Work is ongoing with each of these initiatives and will be described in the final report.

Final Steps

The last phase of our Land Entitlement Process Review includes meetings of the Technical Committee on October 28 and of the Stakeholder Committee on November 4. These meetings will be used to achieve consensus on the categorization of improvements, timeframes and priorities for implementation. There will be discussion of which projects can be accomplished quickly and without additional funding.

We will be scheduling a meeting with each of your offices during the month of November to provide a briefing on the entire project. We'd also like to discuss our next steps and plans for moving forward with implementation of the Stakeholder Committee's recommendations. Our final report will be transmitted in December; it will provide a summary of our entire Land Entitlement Process effort, discussion of proposed changes to our fee accounting process and detailed recommendations for improvements in organization, process and technology.

RJB:DLS

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors